We hope this finds you well and safe.

We had an informative and interesting program on March 5th by Rhoda Miller, certified genealogist specializing in Jewish research and Holocaust studies. Her topic: Gone Girl: DNA and Document Strategies For Finding a VERY Long Lost Female Cousin. DNA and document strategies were unfolded in this quest for a female cousin. Finding females is a common genealogical challenge. When the woman does not want to be found, the challenge becomes even greater. This program taught techniques for breaking through a brick wall as well as resolving new problems on the other side of that wall.

Rhoda said she named the presentation after the Gillian Flynn book and movie Gone Girl, about a woman who left home and does not want to be found. This is the same thing that happened to Rhoda’s very long-lost cousin. By telling her family story, Rhoda demonstrated genealogical research and information strategies. See page 4 for highlights of this program.

We are hoping more members will send in their renewal dues for 2023 now! At the time of writing this president’s letter, we are at 78% renewal. I know more will renew before the date our bylaws require us to drop you from membership – and that date is fast approaching. I ask now for those who have not renewed to do so. I have sent an email to each member who has not renewed. We thank those who have already renewed. A renewal form is available at: https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/membership%20application.pdf

We will start to meet again at Temple Adat Elohim beginning April 2nd at 2:30 p.m. Note the later time due to other functions earlier the same day in the Social Hall. I know many of you are excited about getting back to in-person meetings...as there is an energy being with others that Zoom does not provide. However, Zoom has been great for the past three years and kept us in touch with our monthly meetings. We will probably have at least one Zoom meeting later in the year—depending on the speaker’s location. It is a great option so that we can have geographically distant speakers without the travel and housing costs. Zoom has certainly been a fantastic vehicle for us to keep meeting during these unusual times. We are looking forward to continuing our 17-year affiliation with Temple Adat Elohim. We will require you to wear masks and strongly encourage you to have been vaccinated and boosted...we are a group that is predominately over 50 and with ageing comes some affiliated health issues.

Due to cost increases we will have to provide our own beverage service at

(Cont’d next page)
this year’s in-person meetings at the Temple. We will be bringing the coffee from Starbucks and bottled water from another provider. We would love to have volunteers to keep our coffee and tea table neat and to assist in clean-up at the end of the meeting. Please contact Andrea Massion from our board who has graciously accepted to take on this coordinating role at: andrea@jgscv.org. If you would like to sponsor one or more of this service, please contact me at: president@jgscv.org. See page 10 for more information about the coffee/tea/water service.

I have not heard from anyone about volunteering for our July meeting “Genealogy in the Round” and we need YOU to participate. This is the meeting where you—our members and guests are the presenters. This year it will be held on July 9. Start thinking now of a success, brick wall, or artifact you can share with us. In the past year I hope you have done some genealogy and made some headway. Please contact me so I can place you on the program president@jgscv.org. This event always turns out to be one of the best programs because of your participation!

I hope all of you are continuing to add to your tree. I added two great-great nieces-twins born in Dublin, Ireland to my great niece—my late sister’s granddaughter. I have seen the twins through our monthly family Zoom meetings. Three years ago, I had never heard of Zoom—now I have attended, a bris, baby naming, bat mitzvah, wedding, funeral and shiva, and monthly family gatherings—with attendees from across the globe— all on Zoom.

I mentioned that the USCIS had proposed a rate increase to obtain their records including genealogical records. IAJGS submitted a statement. Now that the time to submit is over it appears as nearly 7,000 comments on the increase in fees were submitted, albeit not all on the genealogy fees but all USCIS proposed fee increases. If you are contemplating ordering any records from the USCIS I would encourage you to do so now, when the fees are $65 for the search if you do not know the number and another $65 for the actual record (paper records are higher--$120 and $260 respectively) as if the proposed fees become adopted the rate increase range from 54% to 300% increase.

Please see Hal Bookbinder’s “Practicing Safe Computing” with #89 in the series, IRS Scams on page 9.

IAJGS has a call for application for candidates to serve as officers on the IAJGS Board of Directors. As it is an odd-numbered year the officers are the four positions for election. IAJGS Officer candidates must be members in good standing of at least one IAJGS member society at the time of their nomination for election and must continuously maintain such membership during their term of office. Description of the roles and responsibilities of IAJGS officers can be found at the IAJGS Policies and Procedures https://tinyurl.com/5n6p7ct3. The deadline for receipt of Board Application Forms by the Nominating Committee is Sunday, March 26, 2023, 7:00 pm Eastern Time. Questions should be addressed to Nominating Committee Chair Heidi Urich at heidi@iajgs.org

Our April 2nd speaker is a return hit: Emily Garber will be talking on Become An Expert: Create a Resource Guide!

Happy Passover and to our non-Jewish members and friends, Happy Easter.

Jan Meisels Allen

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Genealogy in the Round

- Have you ever thought you’d like to present at a genealogy seminar or meeting but lack the experience?

- Have you ever bored a friend or relative with your genealogy details until their eyes glazed over?

- Did your therapist suggest you try public speaking?

- Do you have a research story or topic that you want to share?

If you answered YES to ANY of the above, then you’ll want to participate in the JGSCV Annual Genealogy in the Round on July 9th!

Members are invited to prepare 10 minutes of Genealogy (slides or props are optional) for our July meeting. Your audience are folks who love genealogy as much as you and have your success at heart.

Topics include but not limited to:

What I learned doing Genealogy  Resources that I love
My biggest breakthrough  Meeting newly found family
What I accomplished during quarantine

To speak at the meeting, contact our president at president@jgscv.org and let her know you are coming aboard! She can answer your questions.
Highlights from: “Gone Girl: DNA and Document Strategies For Finding a VERY Long Lost Female Cousin”

By Jan Meisels Allen

Genealogists are often challenged finding female relatives. If a woman does not want to be found, the challenges are that much greater. This program taught techniques for breaking through a brick wall as well as resolving new problems that might arise on the other side of that wall.

Speaker Rhoda Miller, said she named the presentation after the Gillian Flynn book and movie Gone Girl, about a woman who left home and does not want to be found, doing everything in her power to disappear. This is the same thing that happened to Rhoda’s very long-lost cousin. Rhoda’s quest for this female cousin yielded answers to her family story, as well as DNA and document strategies that benefit everyone.

Genealogical Proof Standard

Rhoda started by reviewing the genealogical proof standard: from the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG) [https://bkgcertification.org/ethics standards/]

- Reasonably exhaustive search—looking at every available document
- Complete and accurate citation of sources —listing where you found information as well as where you looked without success, and where you did not look. Citations do not “have to look perfect” but just need to direct you or someone else to the original source if there’s ever question that your information “can’t be”
- Analysis and correlation of the collected information
- Resolution of conflicting evidence—adjudicating the conflicting information using evidence evaluation strategies
- Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion

Rhoda’s Research Question: What Happened to Rebecca Potofsky?
—Rhoda’s great grandparents were Solomon Cholodowsky who married Brana Cholodowsky née Salowe. In the United States the name was changed to Salowe. Her grandfather was Hyman one of nine siblings.
Through her research, Rhoda was able to find and contact 189 of her grandfather’s descendants into the current generations—except for one—Rebecca Potofsky—Rhoda’s “gone girl,” a very long-lost cousin.

Rebecca is the daughter of her grandfather’s sister Dora Cholodowsky and Louis Podofsky. They had two daughters: Rebecca and Bertha. Rhoda knew Bertha but not Rebecca. There was oral history about Rebecca which stated she had run away with a Navy man, had a son, was jealous of her sister Bertha, began using the name “Betty,” visited her Aunt Anna in Atlanta, lived in Newport, VA during World War II, and also San Diego, CA—both which are and were Navy towns.

The Research

Rhoda started her research with finding Rebecca’s birth certificate which was in Russian—she was born in Odessa, and the date of birth did not correlate with either the Gregorian or Julian calendars. The document states she was born on 3 June (Julian Calendar) /1 Tamuz on the Hebrew calendar. The problem arose under the comments column under her name which said she was born on May 12, 1912, which does not correlate to the dates on the record.

Note: The Julian calendar is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. Today, we use the Gregorian calendar—it was first introduced in 1582 and first fully adopted by all countries in 1927. The Julian calendar was replaced because it did not correctly reflect the actual time it takes the Earth to circle once around the Sun. Several days had to be dropped when the Gregorian calendar was adopted.

The Ship’s Manifest

The next document that Rhoda has for Rebecca is her ship’s manifest at age 11 months, sailing from Libau, Russia 6 January 1914. She traveled with her parents and siblings. On the manifest her birth year is given as about February 1913 based on the age of 11 months—which conflicts with the previous information. On the manifest are numbers above her name which indicate that a naturalization process occurred on 8 May 1943. This was an important clue to look elsewhere for other paperwork.

Other Documents

Census

They lived in New York and New York State ran a census every ten years on the “5” years: 1895, 1905, 1915 and 1925. They were first found in the 1915 New York State census living in Brooklyn. Rebecca was listed as age 3.

In the 1920 United States census, Rebecca is listed as age 7 and 9/12 months. This would be about April 1912—not too far off from her birth record.

In the 1925 New York State census, she is listed as age 13—again making her birth year about 1912. Note that the actual date of the census and the birth date may cause the age to be +/-1 year.

In the 1930 census she is listed as age 18 making her born in 1912. The family is now living in Newark, New Jersey.

In the 1940 census—she is age 28, her mother Dora, provided the information to the census taker indicated by an x within a circle.
City Directories

Rebecca is listed in the 1935 and 1938 Newark City directories as Betty L. Potofsky. Her parents-Dora and Louis are listed with their business: Master Cleaners and Dyers.

In the 1941 census all is the same. But the 1942 Newark City Directory informs us that Dora is listed as a widow, informing us that Louis passed away. Rhoda has photographs of Louis’s metzevah from the Radomysler Benevolent Society at Mt. Zion Cemetery in Maspeth, New York and the Obituary from 11 October 1941 where both Rebecca, and her sister listed as “Betty,” and her sister Bertha are mentioned.

After Louis Died

Rhoda’s grandmother lived with Rhoda and her parents. The grandmother used to say that Dora, the mother, “took a walk into the Passaic River.” To Rhoda, this was an apparent suicide attempt. In her newspaper research it showed Dora had attempted suicide in August 1946. The Newark Evening News said the woman was pulled from the river and rescued, unable to explain how she got into the river. However, when Rhoda did her own research in the Newark Public Library, she found two articles, appearing the same day from the Newark Star Ledger and the Newark Evening News dated 23 June 1947 that Dora died from a “plunge” from a three-story building.

While the two Newark newspapers covered the story, they reported it differently. One has the name spelled correctly the other newspaper has the name misspelled. Both said she plunged. However, she fell/jumped next to a young child 7 years of age in one paper and the other 7.5 years of age, one gave parents’ names the other says she fell a few inches from the child and the other a few feet. One gave more information on background, including who provided the information, therefore, it is important to look for alternate sources for greater information. Only one of the newspapers gave information mentioning Betty.

Rhoda emphasized doing research yourself- to call, write, or visit in person, will probably result in better findings than if left to someone else. You would know more about alternate spellings and others in the family that might be mentioned—than someone else, who only has basic information.

Dora was buried the next day, according to Jewish tradition—not enough time for a coroner’s investigation. She then researched at YIVO, the Radomysler Benevolent Society where her death was mentioned. She was able to obtain her death certificate from New Jersey which under cause of death lists suicide by jumping off roof at home. Her name on the death certificate was misspelled.

By the time of death the family knew her daughter Rebecca had run away with the Navy man and her sister was “medically” obese.

Search for Betty

The first document Rhoda found, which Rebecca completed herself was Rebecca’s Alien Registration. Here she says she was born on 1 April 1912 which does not translate to the dates on the previously mentioned Russian records.

The document has her information from 1940. Rhoda has not found her naturalization papers -but did find her declaration of intention- as Rebecca Betty Potofsky.
In trying to track her down, Rhoda found her father’s probate record where Rebecca signed her name as Betty Dixon listing her maiden name as Betty Potofsky on 23 November 1959. This was a huge breakthrough! The notary was in Los Angeles County so now Rhoda can trace her to California from the New Jersey-New York area. With this finding the trail went cold!

In 2003, Rhoda hired a researcher in California who looked at the correct death certificate, but she discounted it because none of the information matched. It turned out it was the correct death certificate.

Too many people named Betty Dixon to find the correct person.

**DNA to the Rescue**

Rhoda did her DNA with Ancestry. She was looking at her closest matches. She had stopped at second cousins. Then one day she scrolled further and found a Robert Dixon. But the screen name was RD not Robert Dixon but managed by a Cristobal Dixon. This person had shared 155 cMorgans—closer to second cousin than a third cousin or a fourth cousin that Ancestry had claimed the person was to Rhoda.

Rhoda knew she found Gone Girl after 25 years—as the photograph that cristobaldixon placed on Ancestry was the same photograph that Rhoda has hanging in her home! She consulted with other cousins who also have the same photograph. In the photograph are Dora and Louis Potofsky with their two daughters, Bertha and Rebecca.

Nothing in the tree that Cristobal Dixon had posted matched what Rhoda had about Betty Potofsky—everything was wrong. She wrote to him in April of 2019 and heard nothing back until the last day of the IAJGS Cleveland conference—August 2, 2019. cristobaldixon turned out to be the son of Betty’s son—her grandson!

**What Rhoda Learned**

As it turned out Betty disguised her background to her family—her son did not know he had a Jewish mother. The biological father either died or disappeared. Bob was raised in a Catholic orphanage for two years. Betty’s husband and Bob’s adopted father was Robert Lord Dixon. At one time Bob found his birth certificate which said he biological father was Walter Scott.

One thing that was upsetting Betty’s mother Dora, was that her husband was not Jewish. She ran Bob’s DNA on three different DNA testing companies. See slide on right.

The three DNA testing companies used said he was Ashkenazi: Ancestry: 70%; FamilyTreeDNA 69% and MyHeritage 56%. She knew he had to be at least 50% Ashkenazi Jewish because of Rebecca—his mother. The implication of about 70% showed that he had at least one paternal Jewish grandparent (50% from the maternal side and 20% from the paternal).
They did his Y-DNA—with absolutely no matches. Built “quick and dirty” tree-no matches. Used GEDMATch Tier 1 tools and used endogamy strategies and clustered results.

**Clues**

Rhoda was able to find Betty’s marriage certificate to Robert Lord Dixon in Louisiana. But she was using Scott as her maiden name. Scott was the name of Bob’s biological father—not her maiden name. She listed her father as Louis Scott—totally untrue! She gave her birth date as April 1, 1917-five years younger than her actual birth certificate. She also said she was born in New York City not Russia.

In the 1950 US Census she lists herself as being born in New York City and along with her is her son Walter age 4 born in Louisiana. Her husband was not listed, but he was a military person. The rule at the time was not to enumerate military personnel who were overseas at the time of the census.

Betty died in 1973 at age 56 and buried in San Diego, CA. The death certificate had erroneous information about her birthdate, birthplace and gave her maiden name as Masters—the name of her parents’ dry cleaners in New Jersey.

**Gone Girl Stuff**

There were massive lies to her family and on documents! But her family and others did not know she was lying. Why does Rhoda know she has the correct person? The death certificate had her Social Security number and that is one thing she could not lie about as Rhoda was able to obtain Rebecca’s/Betty’s SS-5 the application for her Social Security Number made out in 1936 by Betty Potofsky.

In family paperwork, Bob had his application for adoption...and so she ran away in early World War II years. The papers also state that Walter Scott had not contributed to the support of the son Walter Scott Jr. He was adopted in December 1952. Betty never had another child. Walter wanted to change his name on his birth certificate but was denied doing so.

Bob joined the Latter-day Saints when he went to college. He has since been baptized into their church.

After Betty died in 1973, Bob’s father moved to Carlsbad, CA.

Bob was diagnosed with Stage IV pancreatic cancer in 2020 and died in late 2020.

**Louisiana Law Changes Access to Original Birth Certificates**

Change in Louisiana law in 2022 permits adopted children to obtain their original birth certificate and one of Bob’s children applied for Bob’s. The family is still waiting for the copy of the original birth certificate to give a clue as to who was his biological father.

Rhoda ended by saying to us how important it is to have a profile photograph with the DNA. The photograph mentioned above about the family is why Rhoda was able to go on this journey.

We thanked Rhoda for an excellent tutorial on how to do this type of research.

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**Rhoda Miller** has been a Certified Genealogist since 1998, specializing in Jewish research and Holocaust studies. Rhoda is a Past President of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island (JGSLI). With JGSLI, she led the award-winning project of publishing Jewish Community of Long Island. A board member of LitvakSIG, she also serves as Coordinator of the Svencionys District Research Group. As an Instructor for the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP), Rhoda taught in the Eastern Europe course. Rhoda was formerly a Genealogist Researcher for Ancestry ProGenealogists, on the Eastern European team.
Practicing Safe Computing Article #89: IRS Scams

By Hal Bookbinder

As it is now tax season, one can expect various scams related to property, state, or federal taxes. Often these come in the form of emails or text messages. Below is an email a buddy shared from the “IRS”.

While there are clues that it is not legitimate, including the ‘from’ address and some fractured English, some will fall for it. When they click on the link, it will ask for their banking information so that the refund can be credited.

However, once provided, the cybercriminals will instead drain the account, transferring funds to a location beyond the reach of American law. The link may also ask for other identifying information that can be used for criminal activity.

While the bank may eventually restore the funds, they may charge a fee up to $500, based on how long it took to report the theft. Even if your funds are restored, you are in for a serious hassle.

If you click on a link and are asked for personal information, including the routing number and account number for your bank account, see this as a giant red flag. Government agencies will never contact you this way regarding a refund. Such contact will always be by U.S. Mail.

When you pay by check you are sharing all the information needed to take funds out of your bank account. Think about all the checks you have written that are floating though different hands. Similarly, your debit card information can be used to steal from you. Carefully review your monthly statements to quickly reverse unauthorized charges.

Bank statements may now be online and not mailed. Your diligence in reviewing them has not changed. Some scams involve returning deposits “made in error”. The “deposit” is reversed when the funds are not received. By then, the funds that you sent are gone. Carefully verify all withdrawals, checks and charges and deposits. If you wait too long (typically 60 days), you may be out of luck.

Never try to outsmart a cybercriminal via phone, email, or text. They have successfully swindled many educated and intelligent people who thought that they would never be taken. Rather, if called, hang up. If emailed or texted, do not call the number displayed or click on the link, no matter how curious you might be. Rather, call or email the agency directly.


This is the eighty-ninth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAIGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAIGS Lifetime Achievement Award, and his online skills are well documented. All the Safe Computing articles by Hal Bookbinder are available on the JGSCV website https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html.
For those members preparing or contributing to a seder this year, we remind you that our cookbook, "Feeding the Family Tree" (JGSCV 2021) has a few Passover recipes including Helene Rosen’s Passover Cake and Pat Fuller’s Kneidlach. Also, two kinds of Brisket from Carol Flesher’s nanny, and Pat’s family.

Enjoy!

https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/handouts/Feeding%20the%20Family%20Tree_2021.pdf

Coffee / Tea Service

Dear Members,

Due to cost hikes, JGSCV will provide our own coffee and tea service at this year’s LIVE meetings at Temple Adat Elohim. We know this service is comforting and convenient for attendees.

Perhaps there are a few volunteers to keep our coffee and tea table neat, and to assist in clean-up near the end of the meeting. Please contact andrea@jgscv.org to help with the table.

Should you wish to sponsor this service during the year, please contact President Jan at. president@jgscv.org

This could be one time or for the entire year.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Board of Directors

This is your space to share your family stories.

Joan Adler, our June 2020 speaker, suggested our members write up memories and genealogical discoveries to publish in our newsletter.

This month we did not receive any submissions.

We would love to continue the series. If you have something to share please send to Diane at newslettereditor@JGSCV.org and Jan at president@jgscv.org
The Program:

One of the greatest challenges when starting research in a new area is learning and understanding the resources that are available. Maps, gazetteers, archival finding aids, Yizkor books, and local histories are just a few of the resources needed to build a research toolbox. Learn how to conduct a literature review and find more critical resources for your research. This presentation will walk through the steps of building one’s own resource guide - a valuable tool that may serve as a foundation for one’s research for many years to come.

The Speaker:

Emily Garber is an archaeologist by training (B.A., and M.A.), Emily has been researching her Jewish family heritage since 2007 and holds a certificate from Boston University's Genealogical Research program. She is a family history researcher, writer and speaker and owns Extra Yad Genealogical Services.

Emily blogs at https://extrayad.blogspot.com/ and has written two books and several articles on genealogical research. She serves as chair of the Phoenix Jewish Genealogy Group and board member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and the Arizona Jewish Historical Society.
# 2023 JGSCV Meeting Dates

**ALL MEETINGS WILL BE FOR MEMBERS VIA ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<td>April 2</td>
<td>Emily Garber</td>
<td>&quot;Become An Expert: Create a Resource Guide&quot;</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
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<td>Annual Holocaust Memorial Program</td>
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<td>July 9</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>NO Meeting</td>
<td><em>IAJGS Conference will be held in London, England</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>July 30 to August 3, 2023</em></td>
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<td>(IAJGS conference)</td>
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<td>September 10</td>
<td>Andrea Massion</td>
<td><em>Reaching Rebecca: The Hunt for Lost Relative</em></td>
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<td>December</td>
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<td>Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party</td>
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Stanford Libraries launches Taube Archive of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, 1945-46

https://virtualtribunals.stanford.edu/nuremberg

Wikipedia’s ‘Supreme Court’ tackles alleged conspiracy to distort articles on Holocaust

https://tinyurl.com/ywkz9yvu

Stanford Libraries launches Taube Archive of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, 1945-46

https://virtualtribunals.stanford.edu/nuremberg

YIVO Institute of Jewish Research Embraces Access to Eastern European Jewish History Over Gatekeeping…

https://tinyurl.com/52zt5hhy

(Interesting follow up to our February presentation with YIVO Executive Director, Jonathan Brent)

Jewish Philanthropy

Downtown L.A. mural celebrates a woman’s rescue of Jews during the Holocaust

https://tinyurl.com/3x42jv2u

Find Lost Russian & Ukrainian Family

From the outstanding blog of Vera Miller:

Top tips for researching Ukrainian and Russian Resources on Genealogy Indexer

https://lostrussianfamily.wordpress.com/2023/03/18/top-tips-for-researching-ukrainian-and-russian-resources-on-genealogy-indexer/

eJewish Philanthropy

Downtown L.A. mural celebrates a woman’s rescue of Jews during the Holocaust

https://tinyurl.com/3x42jv2u

From Phil Goldfarb’s (pgoldfarb@jewishgen.org)

The Weekly News Nosh:

“400-year-old oak wood Jewish ritual immersion bath found in 'Auschwitz’”

https://tinyurl.com/26mtukkd
2023 Membership/Renewal Form
Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)*
*Member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)
www.JGSCV.org
Dues paid now are good through December 2023
Date _________

Check one:
This is a New Membership_______ Renewal__________
Single $ 30.00____+$1.00** Family* $35.00 ______+ $2.00**

*family defined as two people living in the same household
** $1 per person is a voluntary donation to the IAJGS Stern Award, granted annually when it recognizes institutions for outstanding work in the creation and availability of resources for Jewish Genealogy.

Additional voluntary contributions:
Library Acquisition Fund $_________ Programs Fund $__________
Security Fee Fund $_________
(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for any fund $5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV Mail application to: Helene Rosen,
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) ______________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City ______________________________________________
State ______________________________________________
Zipcode + 4 _______________________________________
Home telephone _______________ Mobile telephone __________
E-mail address _____________________________________
Talents that you have to share (accounting skills, language skills, computer skills, translation, etc.)
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